

## Emergency Preparedness and Response Guide

Federal law associated with the reauthorization of the CCDBG Act of 2014, and licensing regulations for South Dakota, require all licensed programs to have a written emergency and response plan. This Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning Guide was developed to assist licensed programs with the process of creating such a plan.

The plan's purpose is to address readiness, reduce risks of emergencies and to provide for the health and safety of all children in the event of an emergency.

Emergency plans are most effective if they are developed to meet the individual needs of a program and reviewed often enough to remain current. CCS created an *Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan template* to serve as a foundation to this process. Programs can choose to create their own emergency plan, or use the template to assist in that process. The template for licensed centers can be found at:

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN, Licensed Program Template is located at:** [http://dss.sd.gov/docs/childcare/emergency\\_preparedness\\_plan2.pdf](http://dss.sd.gov/docs/childcare/emergency_preparedness_plan2.pdf)

This Guide follows the format of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan Template. The content of each section in this Guide is intended to provide suggestions for consideration related to the federal requirements for developing a licensed program emergency plan. Not all of this information will apply to every program. As you identify what applies to your program, use the guide to help generate ideas that make sense for your program.

The first step in emergency planning is to develop an understanding of all the different types of hazards or emergencies associated with your area of the state and any particular vulnerability your program might have as a result of these hazards. For example,

- What potential disasters are identified in your region? (Flooding, tornadoes, snow storms, etc.)
- What are potential risks due to the location of your facility? (Blizzards, power outages, etc.)
- Are there any specific risks related to the location of your facility?

You can develop awareness of different hazards through your local county emergency managers if necessary. The links below provide Emergency Manager contact information for your area:

SD County Emergency Managers Map

<http://sdemergencymgmt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/SimpleViewer/index.html?appid=d1c7ab8f4a2e411484250925b1a31d22>

SD Tribal Emergency Managers Map:

<http://sdemergencymgmt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/SimpleViewer/index.html?appid=09c610031b9448419da3966a96131318>

Your licensing specialist and Early Childhood Enrichment (ECE) program staff are also available for questions regarding your plan development.

# EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE PLAN

## Child Care or Before and After School Program Guidance

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### PROGRAM INFORMATION

- Complete all sections based on your program information.

### EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

- Complete all sections. Make contact with first responders and city/county emergency management individuals in your area so they are aware of your licensed program. Consider sharing your emergency plan with the emergency manager for your area and discussing your roles in the event of an emergency.

### 1. LOCATION OF EMERGENCY ITEMS

- Designate a place to keep your plan so that it is available for quick access.
- Update your records regularly to keep attendance records, emergency contact information, agreements with relocation facilities, staff and parent contact information current.
- Do not rely entirely on electronic records. Computers may not be operational in an emergency.
- Staff are busy in an emergency, determine alternative ways of notifying families (phone tree, land lines, cell phone, texting, two way radio, email, website, emergency contact outside of the immediate area, local radio, etc.).
- Consider having emergency supplies stored at your off-site location so those don't have to be gathered at the time of an emergency and taken with to that new location.
- Consider including a map as to the location of the facility emergency shut-off for water, gas and electric. Label each of the shut-offs for easy identification. Include instructions for shutting each of these off.

### 2. CHILD CARE EVACUATION

- Staff Roles: Have staff designated so everyone knows what to do when an emergency strikes. Create an action sheet that fits your program needs. Have designated back-up people in case people are unavailable. Some roles to consider include:
  - Incident leader- someone who oversees staff and directs the response activities.
  - First aid person - designated to assess injuries, provide care or determine if an injury requires medical assistance.
  - Communication person- responsible for updates to emergency personnel and to families before, during and after emergency.
  - Transportation lead- oversees movement of staff to relocate or evacuate. Check with local emergency management for safety of roads and relocation locations. Obtain permission slips in advance to transport in an emergency.
  - Reunification lead- track attendance count, reports missing persons to incident leader, secures entrances/exits and monitors sign out of children for reuniting with families.
  - Care coordination- ensures children are receiving the care needed.
  - Facility coordinator- conducts review of facility operations, takes charge of utilities (gas, electric water, sanitation to protect from further damage or injuries.
  - Supplies coordinator- assembles supplies and distributes as needed. Responsible for updated supplies before, during and after emergency.

- Keep in mind that the plan must be specific enough to provide action but flexible enough to allow for changes as unexpected situations may develop. Try to develop standard procedures every time children go outside or move to another area of the center that will work with multiple situations. For example, use the same line up process for going to lunch, going on a field trip, for fire drills, and for real evacuation. Then children and staff know this process.
- Address ways to ensure prompt evacuation of all children. In many centers there is one adult and up to 12 children of varying ages and abilities to evacuate. Think about the abilities of each child and how to ensure swift evacuation. Examples of supports that can assist in evacuation might include a neighbor you can call upon, evacuation cribs for centers with infants that can carry a number of children at once, walking ropes can keep children together while evacuating, some strollers are made to carry more than one child, etc.
- Ensure staff and children are familiar with the layout of the center and where all exits are on each level. Center can collect coats, backpacks, etc., at the entrance doors so ensure all exits are unblocked and accessible at all times.
- Prepare a list ahead of time of items that need to be taken with you in an evacuation. Such items include a list of children present that particular day, medications needed to be administered, diapers, formula, etc.

### **3. ACCOMODATIONS OF VULNERABLE PERSONS**

- Try to keep emergency procedures similar to non-emergencies to reduce stress on children and make it easier to manage the process. For example, incorporate walking ropes into daily walks, conduct regular fire drills using the supports such as the neighbor or evacuation cribs, etc.
- Develop a plan for children who need special items for their care to ensure those items are brought during an evacuation if necessary. This could include medicines, medical devices, a power source for medical equipment, batteries, remember food needs or allergies, etc.
- Develop a plan for having supplies pre-packed, or easily accessible. This could include a small “go bag” containing parent contact information, child/provider name tags, special needs, etc.)
- Store an empty medication “go pack” next to the medicine cabinet or refrigerator for easy access. This pack can be used to take medications, medication authorization forms, etc.
- Emergency personnel or volunteers may be assisting with care of a child that is nonverbal, one with special medical needs or with emotional/behavioral concerns. Determine a way to identify a child with these needs to emergency personnel and staff.
- If an electric wheelchair is used, consider having a lightweight manual wheelchair for backup.
- Consider possible items that may decrease visual or auditory stimulation to relax children (head phones, pop up tents, etc.).

### **4. ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS EVACUATION**

- When looking for in alternative location, consider the programs needs and if the site meets some minimal licensing standards such as two exits, a smoke detector, items that will help ensure children will be safe in this new location. If you have questions regarding those standards, look through the inspection checklists, or consult your licensing specialist. Consider:
  - Accessibility of the location during your program hours of service.

- If the space large enough for everyone, are there bathrooms, is the space free of hazardous materials, is it a safe environment for children and staff.
- Alternative locations can be public facilities like a school, church, library, or a neighbor's home. You will need two sites. One within walking distance and one out of area if the entire neighborhood is in danger. Get to know your community to consider temporary locations and locations to use for longer periods.
- Have a plan for getting children to both of the alternative locations. Have a walking or driving route mapped out. Have parent permissions for transporting children. Always check with emergency personnel regarding safety of your route.
- Make arrangements for using and accessing an alternative site:
  - Contact the owner or designee to determine their willingness to use their site for shelter;
  - Confirm with them what they are willing to provide (shelter for a few hours or a few days, use of a phone, a place to store your emergency supplies, etc.);
  - Obtain access information. If the building is locked, can you obtain a key;
  - Prepare a written agreement so everyone is aware of the expectations and responsibilities; and
  - Contact your relocation site several times a year to ensure it is still available.

## **5. SHELTER IN PLACE**

- Plan ahead for where you will shelter in place and what items will be needed in that space when conditions outside are more dangerous than inside, such as a natural disaster, weather emergency, or disturbance near or in the centers.
- Identify a local radio station that monitors situations and provides local updates. Obtain information from local Emergency Managers and/or Emergency Services about the situation, then assess your specific situation. Determine:
  - If there time to evacuate;
  - If it is safe outside;
  - If there is time to contact parents to send the children home;
  - If the children's homes may be in danger;
  - If everyone be safe inside the home;
  - How long this event might last;
  - The appropriate protective action you need to take;
  - What the plan will be to notify parents.

## **6. EMERGENCY SUPPLIES**

- Emergency supplies that might be needed include:
  - A copy of your Emergency Plan that includes all emergency information and contacts.
  - A First Aid kit
  - Contact numbers for parents and staff;
  - Go Kits – Pre-filled with supplies determined to be a priority for your group of children such as medications, formula, diapers, books, games, etc. for easy access. These can be attached to emergency evacuation equipment to free up hands.
  - Administrative “go kit”, Daily roster and sign-in sheets for children & helpers. Information for each child for identification and contacts.
  - Consider a kit with just business/banking/insurance information to continue operations.
  - Map of your daycare, number of children, ages, evacuation routes, emergency shutoffs.

- Rotate stored items before expiration dates, update important papers; check sizes of clothing, diapers and age appropriateness of items based upon your current enrollment.
- Storing supplies at your off site location will ensure all supplies necessary are already available.

## **7. LOCK-DOWN PROCEDURES**

- Preplan where a lockdown space would be located. Make sure all windows, blinds, and doors can be closed and locked to keep people out. Space with an exit, a smoke detector. Have multiple ways to communicate with emergency personnel, a call may not work, but a text will;
- Emergency situations occur quickly. Plan in advance ways to keep your location a secret if necessary by practicing silencing cell phones, engaging children so they are preoccupied, etc.;
- Ensure access to electricity in this space to charge cell phones; Ensure cell phone charge cords are available;
- Store materials such as plastic and duct tape for closing off external air intakes such as vents or heating and cooling appliances;
- Plan ahead for ways to keep children calm and quiet if necessary. Address concerns with age appropriate honesty and offer reassurance and focus on safety.

## **8. COMMUNICATION PLAN**

- Keep your communication strategy simple so there is not too much to remember.
- Preplan who the emergency contact person will be that parents can call for an update to the situation. This allows the staff to only keep one person updated, and not several parents. Consider an emergency contact person who is out of the area, such as across town, or in the next county, in case the whole neighborhood is affected.
- Inform parents in advance of what form of communication will be used. This might include a phone tree so a staff calls two parents, those two parents take over calling all other parents, so staff can focus on the children.
- Inform emergency personnel and your off- site emergency contact, after you have relocated, of your status.
- Determine the message you want given to the parents and notify parents and guardians as soon as possible.
- Providing relocation plans and reunification plans to parents ahead of time prevents this from needing to be done during an emergency.

## **9. REUNIFICATION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

- Reunification scenarios to plan ahead for:
- Parents affected by the emergency not being able to pick children up in a timely manner;
- Ensure parents provide names of persons who has authority to pick children up, such as extended family, friends, etc.;
- Verifying the identity of people who arrive to pick children up;
- Tracking when a parent picks their child up early so that is accounted for when counting children during the evacuation process; and
- Count heads continuously and notify emergency personnel if someone is missing.

## 10. REOPENING AFTER AN EMERGENCY

Childcare is a valuable service to all communities. The repair and recovery of a community after an emergency often depends upon the ability of many parents to go back to work. Being prepared to provide child care services assists with this process. The ability to reopen your child care program quickly also creates a sense of normalcy and a routine for children. This can be critical to their emotional wellness and recovery after an emergency.

- Work with Emergency Responders to determine if the emergency is over and the area is clear.
- Work with your local building authority or the local licensing staff to determine if the day care is safe and can be re-occupied.
- Your licensing specialist will assist with information and resources for disaster recovery.

This guide is meant to help you plan for an emergency. Other resources available include: .

- U.S Dept. of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Care  
[https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/1306\\_epr\\_provider\\_resource\\_guide.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/occ/1306_epr_provider_resource_guide.pdf)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Children-and-Disasters/Pages/Child-Care-Providers.aspx>
- Center for Disease Control (CDC) <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters>
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) <http://www.ready.gov/be-informed>
- The American Red Cross, <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster-safety-library>